

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

Proposal: The County of Santa Fe has applied for a right-of-way from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to authorize legal access across public land for the South Meadows Road Extension in Santa Fe County. As described in the Proposed Action, the new section of South Meadows Road would extend from Agua Fria Street to the New Mexico #599 Frontage Road where it would intersect with Santa Fe County Road #62. As proposed, approximately 460 feet of the road would be located on BLM land in lot 20, section 31, T. 17 N R. 9 East.

Several sections of South Meadows Road already exist in Santa Fe County which include those segments extending from Cerrillos Road (through Jaguar Road) to Airport Road and between Rufina Street and Agua Fria Street. The Santa Fe Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) traffic model for this area has shown that the proposed extension of South Meadows Road would have significant impact on relieving traffic congestion on the arterial streets in southwest Santa Fe, primarily on Agua Fria Street. It would also improve safety on these roads as well as provide access to landlocked properties in the area of the proposed route.

In addition to the Proposed Action alignment analyzed in the EA, three other routes referred to as Alignments A-C, were also considered in the EA as well as the no-action alternative. None of these alignments would cross lands administered by BLM. The results of the analysis indicated that the three alternative routes would be eliminated from further consideration. The reasons for their elimination are discussed in the EA.

Finding of No Significant Impacts: A thorough analysis of environmental impacts has been conducted and based on that analysis, I have determined that impacts will not be significant. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Public and Agency Review and Comment:

The EA, preliminary FONSI and Decision Record were made available for public and agency review from August 6, 2004 through August 21, 2004. The EA was distributed to the BLM public rooms at the New Mexico State Office and the Taos Field Office, the BLM external webpage and to the Santa Fe Main Public Library and the Oliver La Farge Branch Public Library. No comments were received by BLM or the County of Santa in response to the EA.

Decision to be Made: The BLM only has authority to make decisions regarding lands and resources managed by BLM. Therefore, the decision to be made by BLM is whether the Proposed Action alignment which crosses BLM land would best meet the needs of Santa Fe County for the South Meadows Road Extension as described in the Purpose and Need section of the EA while minimizing impacts to resources on public land.

Decision: It is my decision to select the Proposed Action alternative, authorizing the alignment which would cross BLM land. This decision allows for a right-of-way to be issued to Santa Fe County authorizing the construction, operation and maintenance of a segment of the South Meadows Road Extension on BLM land in accordance with the specifications described in the EA for this alignment.

In addition, I am adopting the mitigation measures described throughout the EA and summarized in section 4, Environmental Commitments to Minimize Potential Adverse Effects.

Actions Connected to the Proposal Outside of this BLM Decision: Actions connected to this proposal but outside BLM's jurisdiction include the authorization and construction of those portions of the South Meadows Road Extension which would be located on private property. Easements or agreements authorizing construction of the South Meadows Road Extension across private lands would be negotiated between Santa Fe County and the respective land owners and would not involve BLM. Any development on private lands along the Proposed Action alignment that resulted from the construction of the South Meadows Road Extension is guided and controlled by the Santa Fe Land Development Code which determines, based on zoning and other factors, the type and level of development that is allowed. The potential for development of private properties for residential and business use is also subject to water availability and decisions on these matters rest with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and the County of Santa Fe.

Rationale for the Decision: My decision to authorize the right-of-way is based on the following rationale:

- The activities within the selected alternative are in conformance with the Taos Resource Management Plan (1988) and BLM policy and guidance.
- The major resource issues identified through BLM interdisciplinary review have been addressed in the analysis and considered in the decision. Based on the analysis in the EA, the impacts of the activities to be authorized are not expected to be significant.
- There are no adverse impacts to Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species or to cultural resources.
- Impacts to resources on BLM land from the implementation of the Proposed Action will be mitigated by stipulations issued with the right-of-way grant. The stipulations will require the implementation of Best Management Practices as well as other measures in the construction of roads and placement of utilities to minimize impacts to resources.



Taos Field Office Manager

8/31/2004

Date